

Stratton Mansion (residence)
(██████ Stratton Hall)
Near Swedesboro
Gloucester County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-82-A

HABS
NJ
8 SWEDBORO
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

Stratton Mansion (residence)
(Alias Stratton Hall)*
Near Swedesboro
Gloucester County, New Jersey

Owner: Charles J. Gibbs, 1244 North 12th Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Date of Erection: 1794*

Architect: Unknown

Builder: James Stratton, M.D., original owner*

Present Condition: Original, well preserved but vacant

Number of Stories: Two and one-half, over cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - local stone rubble masonry

Exterior walls - brick

Interior walls - frame partitions, plastered

Chimneys - brick, built into inside of gable
end walls

Roof - gable, wood shingled

Historical Data:

By deed of 14 December 1790, the Sheriff of Gloucester County, having by order of court in judgment proceedings in the case of Samuel Mevian vs. Elizabeth Burrough, Isaac and William Course, defendants, levied and seized on lands of the latter parties and put up 215

* "Stratton Hall, Swedesboro, was built in 1794" stated Miss Mary Stratton, (1825-1886) a granddaughter of James Stratton, M.D., quoted in S. V. Stratton's Stratton Genealogy, publ. 1901, no page numbers. See also therein a photo of "Stratton Hall, Swedesboro" about 1870, showing verandah added to front and south end and since removed.

acres thereof in Woolwich Township at public sale, conveyed them to James Stratton(a), the highest bidder at 142 Pounds 10 shillings. In this deed it is recited that this acreage comprised the shares held by those previous owners in a certain plantation by devise in the will of Peter Stille of Philadelphia, dated 1st July 1766. The whole 365 acre tract is described in this deed as Beginning at the foot of the bridge, on the east side of Raccoon Creek and in the Road leading from Woodbury to Salem, extending about 1 1/5 miles northeast, partly along the east side of that highway, from a frontage of over a half mile on the creek.

(a) James Stratton, M.D., born 20 Aug. 1755, second son and youngest of three children of Benjamin and Sarah (Austin) Stratton of Fairfield, Cumberland Co., New Jersey, died 29 March 1812 at Stratton Hall, his residence near Swedesboro, Gloucester County. He studied medicine with Dr. Benj. Harris of Pittsgrove, Salem Co., began practice in Clarksboro, Gloucester Co., and served in the Revolutionary War, after which he attended medical lectures one winter in Philadelphia and then settled in Swedesboro, Gloucester Co., New Jersey, "and soon became the leading physician in that portion of the State, a man of influence in civil and political affairs. He was judge of the court and administrator of large estates. His practice extended from Salem to Woodbury, about thirty miles and from the Delaware to twenty miles in the interior. Dr. Stratton was remarkable for his strict moral and religious habits. He early joined the Protestant episcopal church.....He possessed a commanding figure, genial manners, and a Christian tenderness, one whom everybody loved and respected, A Federalist in politics, and his influence controlled the vote of the entire township. He left a large landed estate, but the fall of prices after the War of 1812 very much reduced its value. His tombstone is in Trinity Churchyard, Swedesboro." (Stephen Wickes, History of Medicine in New Jersey, quoted in S. V. Stratton, Stratton Genealogy, 1901).

Subsequently, by deed of 13 May 1793, the grantee James Stratton purchased from John Stille and wife Mary, for 100 Pounds "lawful gold and silver money of New Jersey", the title to the entire original 600 acre plantation in Woolwich Township of which Stille had come into full possession by a deed of 6 April previous from his sisters Elizabeth Burrough and Sarah House (or Yorke?) and the latter's husband Samuel conveying their two-thirds interest to him. This deed is remarkable for reciting the title back through seventeen conveyances to the will of Andrew Robeson of Philadelphia, Penna., dated 12 November 1694, which devised a 950 acre tract to be laid out on Raccoon Creek "adjoining ye fishing place"(b).

James Stratton, M.D., having acquired in 1790-93 the estate across Raccoon Creek from Swedesboro and erected this mansion house in 1794 thereon, resided there at the time of his death, having by will dated 10 October 1811 devised to his wife Mary Stratton(c) "my present

(b) Deed recorded in Gloucester Co. Book C, p. 11. See Hist. and Geneal. Acct. of Andrew Robeson of Scotland, N. J., and Pa., and His Descendants, publ. 1916; Publ. of Geneal. Soc. of Pa., II, 20 and III, 32.

(c) Dr. James Stratton mar. 1st 15 July 1779, Anna Harris, dau. of Benjamin Harris of Bound Brook, N.J., and mar. 2nd 1st of January 1789, Mary Creighton, dau. of Hugh Creighton of the Indian King Tavern, Haddonfield (NJ-99). Issue by 1st wife: Benjamin b. 18 Apr. 1780, d. 29 Aug. 1795; Sarah b. 30 Sept. 1781, d. 12 Feb. 1852, wf. of Edwd. Carpenter; Anna b. 12 Dec. 1782, wf. of Dr. John L. Stratton of Mt. Holly, N.J., and by 2nd wife: Maria b. 17 Nov. 1789, d. 1852, wf. of Dr. Erskines Fithian and of Daniel P. Stratton of Bridgeton, N.J.; James C. b. 17 Nov. 1792, d. 26 July 1793; Rev. Samuel C. b. 10 May 1794, d. 28 Oct. 1860; Charles C. b. 6 Mar. 1796, d. 30 Mar. 1859; Harriet C. b. 4 Jan. 1798, d. 9 May 1850, wf. of Dr. Jos. Fithian of Woodbury, N.J.; Isabella b. 10 July 1799, d. 11 July 1847, wf. of Benj. M. Howey of Glouc. Co. N.J.; Frances b. 24 Mar. 1802, d. 2 Feb. 1890, Phila. unmar.; and Abigail b. 9 Jan. 1805, d. 27 Apr. 1805. (Sidney V. Stratton, Stratton Genealogy, publ. 1901, no pagination).

dwelling house and all the land thereunto appertaining, lying on the south side of the Salem Road, with all the buildings and improvements thereon", and desired his executors after her death to "sell my Mansion house and land."

Mary Stratton, widow of Dr. James Stratton of Stratton Hall, died before 17 June 1847, whereby the estate descended to his children, and by deed of this date, they as Sarah S. Carpenter, Maria, Samuel C., Frances, and Benjamin H., Stratton, and Joseph Fithian and wife Harriet and Isabella Howey, conveyed to their brother Charles Creighton Stratton "all the said Mansion house, land and premises" of their father, for \$3500.

This grantee, Governor Charles C. Stratton(d), who thus came into full possession of Stratton Hall, resided there until his death in 1859(e), having by his will dated 3 January 1859 devised to his brother, the Rev. Samuel C. Stratton, "the Homestead Farm whereon I now live, together with the Stone house and lot of

(d) He was b. 6 Mar. 1796, in this house and d. there 30 Mar. 1859, a son of Dr. James Stratton and his 2nd wife Mary Creighton, graduated from Rutgers College, member of U. S. Congress 1837-39 and 1841-43, Governor of New Jersey 1845-48, mar. 1st Feb. 1854 Sarah Taggart, dau. of Joseph and Mary Taggart of Phila. (Stratton Genealogy cited above.)

(e) His sister Frances Stratton, 24 March 1802 - 2 Feb. 1890, "presided at Stratton Hall after the death of her mother and until the marriage of Governor Stratton (1854) when she removed to Bridgeton and resided there until 1873 and later at Philadelphia. (Stratton Genealogy, cited above).

land adjoining"(f). This devisee died intestate on 28 October 1860, and the estate descended to his two children, James and Mary Stratton, subject to the life interest of the widow Elizabeth H. Stratton.

Accordingly by their deed of 8 March 1869, these three heirs conveyed to James D. Gibbs the said Homestead farm as then comprising some 114 acres having the same frontage on the east side of Raccoon Creek as when Dr. Stratton purchased the larger tract in 1790-93. By deed of 1 March 1916, the executor of the estate of this grantee, James D. Gibbs, decd., conveyed the same to Charles J. Gibbs and he remained as owner at the time your survey of the house in 1934.

Reference:

Search of title in land and probate records of Gloucester County and in those of the Province of New Jersey by Oscar F. Benjamin, H.A.B.S. research editor, reported 30 Oct. 1936

Lewis D. Cook

Supervising Historian 28 July 1941

Approved:

Seymour Williams

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.

District Officer

(f) Stone House surveyed as NJ-82A, with date ca. 1760 and called the Peter Stille House in honor of him who owned the 600 acre tract 1752-1766 on which it (and later the Stratton Mansion) stood. But note that Stille was a resident of Phila., as was also the previous owner, Evan Morgan, 1748. In 1859 it was occupied by Isaac Ore.

BRIEF OF TITLE OF PROPERTY

- 1699 - March 7 - Andrew Robeson or Robinson
- 1701 - Wm. Dalbo
- 1712 - Andrew Dalbo
- 1790 - To James Stratton from Jno. Blackwood, Sheriff
- 1812 - To Mary his widow
- 1847 - To her children
- 1847 - Heirs of James Stratton, to Charles Stratton
- 1859 - To Sam Stratton, children
- 1860 - To Sam Stratton, heir at law
- 1869 - Elizabeth Stratton, widow and children, James and Mary Stratton to James D. Gibbs
- 1869 - Deed to Gibbs, April 1, 1869 at Paris, France before the U. S. Consul.
- 1933- The property now owned by the four children of James Gibbs.

In 1699 the property was owned by one Andrew Robeson or Robinson and at that time the place was known as the "Fishing Place". Then later mention is made of the property as "Mesuage Plantation", this was in 1766, probably at the time when the place was still owned by some member of the Dalbo family or their connections, before the law in the form of Blackwood the Sheriff had taken its course or something.

A hint of fallacy may be found in the fact that the date of the building of the present Stratton Hall is given as 1784, altho the property was apparently not deeded to Stratton until 1790, howsoever, that may have been.

James Stratton was a doctor who after his first wife died married again and built Stratton Hall for his second wife, who by the way was a daughter of Hugh Creighton of Haddonfield, who was famed as a tavern master, with the numerous stories connected with such persons, his tavern the Indian King played rather prominent part in the politics of this state as well as a place of gathering for the natives in their less serious moments. By this marriage Stratton allied himself with one of the "F.F.V's", namely the Payne's. Hugh Creighton, an uncle of Dolly Payne, later Dolly Madison.

Stratton's son, Charles Creighton Stratton was born at Stratton Hall in 1796. Charles Stratton later becoming a member of Congress and then was elected governor of New Jersey in 1844.

Revised 1936, H.C.F.

NOTE

Source of information,--a letter from Miss M. Taddiken to Seymour Williams, District Officer, dated April 30/34.